Trade Apprentices in Defence Factories At Jabalpur

5250. SHRI SHRAVAN KUMAR PATEL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of trade apprentices trained at the different defence factories at Jabalpur during the last three years;

(b) the number of those who have been employed out of them and the number of vacancies still lying to be filled up; and

(c) the reasons for not fiiling up the vacancies?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (c). Under the Apprentices Act, 1961, three hundred and thirty seven Apprentices were trained at Ordnance Factories and the Army Base Workshop at Jabalpur, during the last three years. Even though the Ordnance Factories are required to provide training to the Trade Apprentices, no obligation rests on the Factories for the employment of such Apprentices, who are also not obliged to accept employment under them. Employment of such Apprentices in the Ordnance Factories depends upon the available workload and vacancies for fresh recruitment. The present work-load position in the Jabalpur factories does not warrant any fresh induction of Industrial Employees.

Demand to Make Rupee Fully Convertible

5251. SHRI SHRAVAN KUMAR PATEL: WILL THE MINISTEr of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry has demanded that the rupee be made fully convertible; and

(b) if so, the Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR): (a) and (b). The Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) has suggested that the process of liberalisation initiated through the recent trade policy reforms would eventually lead to a convertible rupee. The Government also hopes that within period of 3 to 5 years the rupee will become fully convertible on the trade account.

Import of Cashew Kernels

5252. SHRIMATI SUSEELA GOPALAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government have declined permission to the cashew industry in Kerala to import cashew kernels;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) whether the Government propose to allow the import of cashew kernels in the near future?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER N THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED): (a) to (c). Under Import & Export Policy 1990-93, Cashew Kernels is a restricted item for import since cashew Industry exports cashew kernels rather than importing them. In the year 1990-91, India exported cashew kernels worth more than Rs. 430 crores.

[*Translation*]

Funds Allocated To States for State Highways

5253. SHRI LALIT ORAON: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state: